

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1176

USIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRAGUE 2848

USIA FOR IEU

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL, PFOR, OEXC, CZ

SUBJECT: USIA ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SHIRLEY'S CALL ON DEPUTY FOREIGN
MININISTER SPACIL

SUMMARY: SPACIL SAYS GOC WILL NOT ALLOW ESTABLISHMENT OF
AN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER IN PRAGUE UNTIL RELATIONS ARE
"COMPLETELY NORMAL," NOR WILL IT ALLOW A MENTION IN THE
EXCHANGE AGREEMENT OF AN UNQUALIFIED PROVISION FOR INDIVIDUAL
EXCHANGES, SPECIFICALLY OF CZECHOSLOVAKS WHO MIGHT WANT TO
USE THE AGREEMENT AS A WAY OF GETTING TO THE UNITED STATES.
HIS POSITION WAS NOT ENCOURAGING, ALTHOUGH HE LEFT THE DOOR
OPEN A CRACK HOPING "THE NEGOTIATORS CAN WORK OUT LANGUAGE
ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES." HE SAYS VOA GIVES TOO MUCH
COVERAGE TO DISSIDENTS AND REF'S TREATMENT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA
IS "ABHORRENT." END SUMMARY.

1. INDIVIDUALS

IEU AREA DIRECTOR JOHN W. SHIRLEY, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR
BYRNE AND PAO QUINN, CALLED ON DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER
DUSAN SPACIL SEPT. 29. SHIRLEY MADE THREE POINTS DURING
PRESENTATION; NECESSITY OF HAVING ADEQUATE REFERENCE TO
POSSIBILITY OF INDIVIDUAL EXCHANGES IN AGREEMENT CURRENTLY
BEING NEGOTIATED, IMPORTANCE US ATTACHES TO INCLUDING
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CONCEPT OF A CULTURAL CENTER IN AGREEMENT, AND PROBLEM WE

HAVE WITH UNRESERVED NEGATIVISM OF CZECH MEDIA ABOUT EVERY ASPECT OF AMERICAN LIFE AND POLICY. SPACIL, IN WHAT HE TERMED "BLUNT AND POSSIBLE HARD" LANGUAGE SAID GOC WILL SIGN "NO AGREEMENT TO INCLUDE INDIVIDUAL CONTACTS. THIS DOESN'T CORRESPOND WITH OUR WAY OF DOING THINGS AND IT DOESN'T CORRESPOND WITH THE HELSINKI ACCORDS." TREND OF CONVERSATION TWICE FORCED SPACIL WITH SOME RELUCTANCE TO EXPRESS HOPE THAT "THE NEGOTIATORS WILL FIND LANGUAGE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH OF US." AMBASSADOR AND SHIRLEY REITERATED THAT MOST EXCHANGE ACTIVITY FROM US SIDE WILL BE FUNDED BY PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS OR PERSONS, THAT CONGRESS WOULD NOT SUPPORT AN AGREEMENT THAT LIMITED, NOT EXPANDED, THE POSSIBILITIES FOR EXCHANGES, AND THAT WE SOUGHT LANGUAGE IN PRESENTING THIS ISSUE THAT IS CLOSE TO THAT OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS. SPACIL SAID, "YOU HAVE SIGNED ACCORDS WITH COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE, SOME OF WHICH HAVE THIS LANGUAGE IN THEM, SOME OF WHICH DON'T. PLEASE INCLUDE US IN THE CAMP OF THOSE WHO DON'T HAVE IT."

2. CULTURAL CENTERS

SPACIL SAID, "WE DON'T SAY THERE WON'T BE AN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER IN THE FUTURE, BUT WE DO SAY THERE WON'T BE ONE UNTIL OUR POLITICAL RELATIONS ARE NORMALIZED," TO WHICH HE ADDED THE PHRASE "COMPLETELY NORMALIZED," AFTER WHICH HE LISTED FOUR CONDITIONS: 1) RETURN OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK GOLD; 2) SETTLEMENT OF THE CLAIMS AGREEMENT; 3) GRANTING OF MFN TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA; AND 4) EXCHANGE OF MINISTERIAL VISITS. (LAST ITEM APPEARS TO BE NEW TWIST.) SPACIL SAID THE GOC HAS ALLOWED THE FRENCH TO HAVE A LIBRARY, LANGUAGE TEACHING CENTER, AND SCIENTIFIC/TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM AND "NOWHERE IS IT WRITTEN THAT WE SHOULD NOT HAVE THESE THINGS WITH THE UNITED STATES." AMBASSADOR AND SHIRLEY SAID PRESENT AGREEMENT POINTED DIRECTION FOR FUTURE FORMS OF COOPERATION AND LISTED SOME 50 CATEGORIES OF POSSIBLE EXCHANGE ACTIVITY, NOT ALL OF WHICH WOULD BE IMMEDIATELY REALIZABLE. SPACIL DODED THE ISSUE. HE SAID, "BUT YOU ARE ASKING FOR A TWO-YEAR AGREEMENT, AND IF YOU WANT A CULTURAL CENTER, YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO HAVE ONE IN THAT PERIOD." SHIRLEY RAISED QUESTION OF GOC MEDIA TREATMENT OF US WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS "FAR FROM SATISFACTORY. YOUR JOURNALISTS' ATTACKS ON US ARE FREQUENT AND HARSH. WE DON'T EXPECT YOU TO LIKE US, BUT YOUR REPORTING ABOUT OUR POLICY AND SOCIETY

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LACKS ANY OBJECTIVITY AT PRESENT." SPACIL SAID THAT GOC IN GENERAL AND PRESIDENT HUSAK IN PARTICULAR CAME IN FOR CONSTANT ATTACK BY THE AMERICAN PRESS. HE COMPLAINED THAT WHEN AMERICAN JOURNALISTS COME TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA, THE FIRST THING THEY DO IS TRY TO CONTACT DISSIDENTS. THEY WRITE ABOUT 1968 AND FINALLY THAT THE PEOPLE ARE "WELL-FED BUT UNHAPPY." AMBASSADOR ADDED THAT AMERICAN COVERAGE BY RUDE PRAVO "IS THE MOST NEGATIVE IN EASTERN EUROPE AS

FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED."

3. VOA

SPACIL SAID THAT GOC DOES NOT INTERFERE; I.E., JAM VOA, BUT THAT VOICE CONTINUES TO FAVOR DISSIDENTS TOO OFTEN IN ITS NEW REPORTING. REFERRING TO LAST YEAR'S DISCUSSION BETWEEN MFA PGQSS DIRECTOR KADNAR AND PAO QUINN, HE SAID, "OF 237 VOA STORIES, 58 DEALT WITH DISSIDENTS, AND 20 WITH CZECH DISSIDENTS." "THE SITUATION HAS NOT CHANGED A YEAR LATER," HE EMPHASIZED. SHIRLEY RESPONDED THAT HE HAD PROFESSIONAL INTEREST IN VOA'S ACCURACY AND WOULD WELCOME KADNAR'S SPECIFIC COMMENTS ABOUT ANY PARTICULAR STORY OR ITEM OF COVERAGE. HE ADDED THAT, AS OFFICIAL USG RADIO, VOA WAS UNDER MANDATE BOTH TO PRESENT US POSITIONS ON POLICY QUESTIONS AND TO REFLECT LIFE AND ATTITUDES IN THE US. SPACIL SAID, "THE TROUBLE IS YOU DO IT IN CZECH," IMPLYING THAT VOA'S COVERAGE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA WAS MAGNIFIED AND PRESENTED THROUGH EMIGRE REPORTERS. SHIRLEY AGAIN REITERATED THAT ANY SPECIFIC CITATIONS ON VOA REPORTING ARE WELCOME, AND COULD BE RELAYED VIA PAO.

4. RADIO FREE EUROPE

NOTING THAT GOC MAKES A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN VOA AND RFE, SPACIL SAID HE FOUND LATTER'S COVERAGE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA "ABHORRENT" AND "COMPLETELY AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF HELSINKI." "TO PUT IT MILDLY, THIS US-GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED RADIO HAS THE PURPOSE OF STIRRING UP DISCONTENT BEHIND THE 'IRON CURTAIN' AND CAUSING PEOPLE TO EXPRESS THEIR DISCONTENT." HE SAID IT WAS "REGRETTABLE" THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER RECENTLY AFFIRMED RL AND REF'S PURPOSE. SHIRLEY REPLIED THAT, "REF IS NOT AN OFFICIAL US GOVERNMENT BROADCASTER AND DOES NOT PRETEND TO REFLECT OFFICIAL US POSITIONS IN ITS BROADCASTS." HE NOTED THAT SPACIL WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE RECENT KISSINGER

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STATEMENT WITH REGARD TO OUR VIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STATION, AND THERE WAS LITTLE HE COULD ADD TO THAT. "THAT'S WHY WE CANNOT HAVE AN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER IN PRAGUE," SPACIL CONCLUDED.

5. COMMENT: DESPITE THE SHARPLY DIVERGENT POINTS OF VIEW, FRANKLY EXPRESSED BY PARTICIPANTS ON BOTH SIDES, THE MEETING'S ATMOSPHERE WAS CORDIAL. SPACIL HAD REMEMBERED HIS EARLIER ASSOCIATION WITH SHIRLEY IN WASHINGTON, AND WAS COMPLIMENTARY TO BOTH AMBASSADOR AND PAO ON THE PRESENT EXTENT OF CULTURAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND THE ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH THEY ARE BEING CONDUCTED. HE ALSO SAID HE HOPED TO ATTEND THE LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC CONCERT IN PRAGUE DECEMBER 10, "IF THE AMBASSADOR WILL INVITE ME," AND THE AMBASSADOR'S ELECTION RETURNS WATCHING PARTY ON NOV. 3 AT THE

RESIDENCE. SIXTH DEPARTMENT HEAD ZANTOVSKY AND SPACIL'S
EXECUTIVE AIDE SIMECEK INDICATED THEY WOULD ATTEND AS WELL.

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6. BOTH SIDES EXPRESSED PREVIOUSLY STATED POSITIONS ON
THE PRESS ISSUE. AS FOR THE QUESTION OF INDIVIDUAL
EXCHANGES, SPACIL WAS FIRM, BUT SEEMED TO INDICATE ROOM FOR
SLIGHT MOVEMENT, SPECIFICALLY THAT THE NEGOTIATORS MIGHT
POSSIBLY FIND LANGUAGE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES. ON THE
QUESTION OF CULTURAL CENTERS, THE POSITION HE TOOK WAS
UNEQUIVOCAL. HOWEVER, WE REGARD THE QUESTION OF SUCH
MAGNITUDE THAT WE INTEND TO LINK THE INCLUSION OF
"PATENTS AND LICENSES" PROVISION IN THE SCIENTIFIC SIDE OF THE
AGREEMENT WITH INCLUSION OF CULTURAL CENTERS. AS REPORTED PRAGUE
2792 WE HAVE SO FAR WITHHELD AGREEING TO INCLUDE PATENT AND
LICENSING LANGUAGE, KEEPING IT AS BERGAINING CHIP.

7. HOWEVER, A POSSIBLE LAST RESORT ALTERNATIVE MAY BE TO PROPOSE
OFFERING TO SIGN A SEPARATE PROTOCOL AT THE TIME THE ACCORDS ARE
CONCLUDED, SAYING IN EFFECT THAT, "BOTH PARTIES WILL CONSIDER
THE QUESTION OF ESTABLISHING CULTURAL CENTERS AT A TIME TO
BE AGREED UPON."

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